

Manitoba
Culture, Heritage
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Historic Publications



THE BEGINNING OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MANITOBA



Cover: Men wearing prayer shawls (tallit), rectangular garments made of silk or wool with black or blue stripes and with fringes (tzitzit) at each of their four corners, and phylacteries (tefillin), black leather cubes containing spiritual passages, with straps attached, worn on the left arm and forehead by Jewish males over age 13. Morning services, Jewish Old Folks Home, 426 Manitoba Avenue, Winnipeg, 1922.

Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada Collection, Manitoba Archives

THE BEGINNING OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MANITOBA

European Conditions

The assassination of Czar Alexander II of Russia by a revolutionary's bomb on March 1, 1881 was followed by a violent reaction against Russian Jewry, which numbered about 5,000,000 people. Many Russians, including government officials, blamed the Jews for the Czar's death. As a result, pogroms (organized massacres and looting of Jews with the knowledge of the government) occurred throughout south-western Russia. Combined with the introduction and rigorous enforcement of the discriminatory "Temporary Rules" or "May Laws" of 1882, which imposed severe economic, social, and political restrictions on Jews, the pogroms led to a massive exodus of Russian Jewry to Western Europe and North America which continued unabated until 1914.

Mansion House Committee

Shock and consternation over the plight of Russia's Jews were expressed in many countries in 1881-82. In Great Britain, the Mansion House Committee was formed to raise funds and to direct assisted emigration from Russia. It derived its name from the residence of the Lord Mayor of London where the organizational meeting was held on February 1, 1882. The Committee, consisting of Christian and Jewish political, business, religious, and intellectual leaders received financial donations from around the world. By mid-June 1882, the Committee had subsidized the trips of 6,694 Russian Jews to the United States and Canada along with thousands of others to Western Europe.

Destination Canada

Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, Canada's High Commissioner to Great Britain, was among those who joined the Mansion House

Committee. His reasons for doing so were both humanitarian and business-related. He was a vocal proponent of increased immigration and European capital investment in Western Canada. Before and during his Committee service, Galt, who believed that the Jews were influential in Europe, cultivated the Rothschilds in the hope of establishing an international colonization company with a capital stock of \$1,000,000. Although Galt shared with Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald and other officials a stereotypical view of Russian Jews as rag pedlars, he advanced the idea of immigration of Russian Jewish refugees to Manitoba and the North-West Territories, on February 21, 1882.

The Mansion House Committee's acceptance of Galt's proposal led several weeks later to the despatch of approximately 400 Jewish refugees from the Austrian Galician city of Brody bound for Winnipeg. Committee plans called for the Jews, described by Galt as being in the majority "mechanics of useful trades" and "small traders," to become farmers and farm labourers in Western Canada. London's *The Jewish Chronicle*, choosing to overlook the occupational make-up of the refugees, stated that "*bona fide agriculturists*" were being sent to Manitoba where labour commanded a high price. The weekly newspaper claimed that arrangements had been made to allow "the establishment of a farming colony under conditions such as will enable the settlers to keep their religion." Moses Finkelstein, an *émigré* who was then nine years old, later recalled that during the ocean crossing, when their vessel was imprisoned for nearly two weeks in ice in the North Atlantic, the Russian Jews were enthusiastic about becoming farmers.

The Jewish population of Canada, 2,393 in 1881, was centred in Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, and Victoria, and was numerically insignificant. Only a small group of Jews lived in Manitoba, mostly in Winnipeg. Although Jewish merchants and fur traders from St. Paul, Minnesota, had passed through Fort Garry and Winnipeg in the 1860s and early 1870s, the first permanent Jewish residents did not arrive until 1877. Most of the Jews resident in Winnipeg before 1882 were small businessmen of British or German background, adherents of the Reform branch of Judaism, and integrated into the larger society.

The New Immigrants Arrive

Winnipeg was then at the centre of the frenetic Western Canadian real estate boom of 1881-82. With a rapidly growing



Main Street, Winnipeg, 1882, looking north from Lombard Avenue.

Courtesy: Manitoba Archives

population of more than 8,000, including several hundred and perhaps thousands of "floaters," living costs were prohibitive and suitable accommodation was unavailable in the "city of tents." Despite their small numbers — perhaps 30 persons — and limited resources, Winnipeg Jews, on short notice, responded in a humanitarian manner and attempted to prepare the way for the refugees. Arrangements were made for free use of temporary quarters at the Fort Garry Dominion Immigration Shed near the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. As successive groups of the Russian Jews arrived in Winnipeg on May 26 and June 1 and 8, they were escorted to the Shed and fed by the Jewish community. These groups probably numbered in total around 350 because some refugees had remained in Eastern Canada. One of seven Yiddish-speaking Winnipeg Jews was present daily at the Shed to act as an interpreter and to accompany the refugees to work.

Community Support

Winnipeg's Jews immediately raised \$360 (\$1,200 in total over the next few months) and organized a relief committee of Jews and Christians. Disclosures that the "wealthiest" refugee had \$42, that many of the adults were ill with rheumatism and fevers, and the children with measles, and all were in need of food and additional clothing, brought forth material and financial donations. The humanitarian spirit was illustrated well by the Bishop of Rupert's Land, Robert Machray, who, a few days before the refugees arrived, advised Alexander Logan, Mayor of

Winnipeg, that "... They will need employment and they will be a difficulty as they do not speak English or French. This is a case that the (City) Council and Public will have to consider. I am willing to subscribe \$100 personally."

The Dominion Government at this time declined to aid any immigrants, let alone refugees, and believed that Canadian Jewry would undertake "the work of settling and providing" for the Russian Jews. Nevertheless, partially as a result of Galt's lobbying efforts, Ottawa donated to the relief committee 1,000 lbs. of flour, 200 of oatmeal, ten of tea, two kegs of syrup, 30 tents, and a small per capita money grant.

Manitoba's press had published several accounts of the desperate condition of Jews in Russia, and some newspaper editorialists had expressed sympathy for their situation. *The Emerson International*, for example, indignantly observed that "in semi-barbarous Russia the Hebrews have been used like beasts, their goods despoiled, and their lives taken" and urged the Czar to "put a stop to the disgraceful, ignorant, and bigoted persecution to which the Jews are being subjected in his land."

As a result of newspaper reports, and a published letter from a Jewish surgeon-barber in Russia, many Manitobans were sympathetic to Russian Jewry's situation. They also supported what John Taylor, the former Dominion Icelandic Immigration Agent in Manitoba, had described as "the benevolent design of providing new homes far removed from the cruelties and atrocities so shamefully perpetrated on this people in the name of religion."

Jews Join the Workforce

A favourable impression of the refugees was formed when many immediately began to work as manual labourers unloading lumber for the firm Jarvis and Berridge, loading gravel in the pits of the Manitoba and South-Western Colonization Railway, digging ditches, and excavating basements. Winnipeg's *The Daily Sun* stated that the Russian Jews had "been driven forth for conscience sake," were "inoffensive and industrious," and would be "rewarded for their pains," because in Winnipeg "every man — Protestant and Catholic, Greek and Jew — may build his altar and hearth, with none to make him afraid."

About 150 Russian Jews were hired by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Originally engaged in splitting rails and



Construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway on the Prairies, 1882. Russian Jews helped build the main line, and Jews later worked in the Winnipeg shops of the Canadian transcontinental railways.

Courtesy: Manitoba Archives

grading and ballasting the rail line, they later worked as tracklayers. Despite two incidents at Whitemouth and Rosser involving assaults by other workers on Jews — one of which resulted in the Chief Justice of Manitoba sentencing the offender to one month in jail for common assault and offering a poetically eloquent history of the Jews — many of the refugees worked for the railway for several weeks at regular wages of \$2.00 - \$2.50 per day. The company permitted families to be with the men, and provided them with tents, bedding, stores, and an interpreter.

The C.P.R. made special arrangements for the Russian Jews who worked from July to October 1882, on the main line as far west as Medicine Hat. The refugees were given the use of two-storey boarding cars in which to eat and to sleep, were able to eat kosher food, and were exempted from working on the Sabbath, although with loss of pay. They were allowed to return to Winnipeg for the Jewish High Holy Days in September, although some who did not return worshipped in a tent along the rail line. Between religious days, all the Jewish railway workers were given the opportunity to engage in "such work as... (was) obtainable in the city."

Survival on the Prairies

As the autumn of 1882 progressed, the economic effects of the recession that fell on Winnipeg and Western Canada following

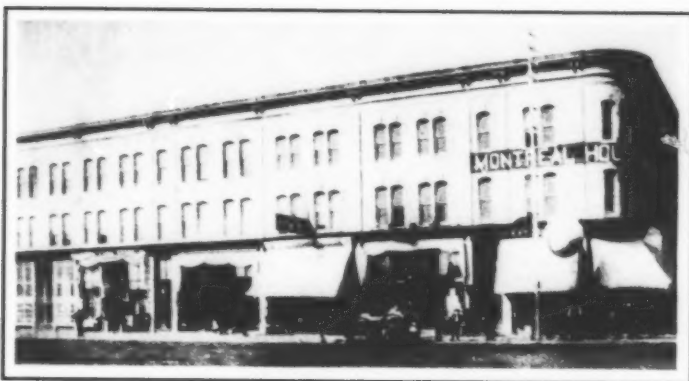
the collapse of the great real estate boom increasingly were felt. The Russian Jews living in the city found employment opportunities scarce. Despite the oncoming depression, house rentals in the city often were referred to as "exorbitant" and "ruinous." When the railway construction season ended in November — in addition to the C.P.R., some refugees had been working on the Portage, Westbourne and Northwestern Railway — many Russian Jews who could not afford rent were forced to return to primitive accommodations. This was especially the case for those railway workers who had earned \$300 - \$500 during the construction season, and had lost their small amount of savings in the economic down-turn. Most were forced to live in small compartments in the one-storey wooden Immigration Shed, "intended for summer use only," and surrounding shanties and tents on the Hudson's Bay Company Flats.

Wilhelm (William) Hespeler, in his capacity as Dominion Immigration Agent in Winnipeg, had been involved in continuous dealings with the Russian Jews. He had retired from this position, but was asked by the Dominion Government to maintain personal supervision over the refugees in the Shed. He telegraphed authorities in Ottawa to remove the *émigrés* to Eastern Canada, to spare them further suffering during the coming winter, but his recommendation was not heeded.

The refugees were forced to remain in Winnipeg in 1882 for several reasons. The Mansion House Committee had not completed satisfactory preparations respecting land and supplies for the Russian Jews, although *The Jewish Chronicle* optimistically reported that "proper arrangements have been made for enabling the farming settlement to be ... formed." Furthermore, the Dominion Government was not willing to give any special consideration with respect to a land grant. This was despite previous assurances from the Minister of Agriculture, J.H. Pope, and private indications from Macdonald that his Government was "quite ready to assign the Jews lands." In addition, there was the failure of a small party of Russian Jews and of Victor Victorson, a Jewish hardware merchant and real estate dealer who acted as the liaison between Hespeler and the refugees, to obtain fertile land in south-western Manitoba or in the Qu'Appelle region of the North-West Territories.

Adjusting to a New Community

Regardless of the material and moral aid given the refugees, the period of social, cultural, and linguistic acclimatization was



The Landerkin Block, southwest corner of Main Street and Logan Avenue, 1890. This was the home of Jewish merchants including George Frankfurter at "The Fair" and Brown and Coblentz. Early Jewish religious services were held in an upstairs hall.

Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada Collection, Manitoba Archives

traumatic. Although his gloomy outlook changed a few months later, S.F. Rodin, one of the Russian Jews, reflected the pain of adjustment and described the "lamentable condition" of his fellow refugees in a letter to the Russian Hebrew publication, *Hamelitz*, in June, 1882: "... One hears nothing but weeping and wailing over the prospect of wasting one's youth and spending it vainly in this desolate spot ... We were exiled to a wilderness. Even such work as chopping wood, hewing stone or digging the soil is not to be found, and the cost of living is extremely high."

Rise of Anti-Semitism

Antipathy toward the Russian Jews from the public and some elements of the Winnipeg press, increasing during the summer, became widespread several months later and probably intensified the refugees' alienation. Even Dominion Immigration Agents in Winnipeg forwarded negative reports to their superiors in Ottawa. Undoubtedly, much of the enmity to the Jewish immigrants was founded on their very different cultural traditions, ignorance of the English language, difficulties in adapting to a new environment, failure to take to farming, and with few exceptions, lack of short-term financial self-sufficiency.

Hostility, based on stereotyping, may have been reinforced by a number of court cases, given prominence in Winnipeg newspapers, involving business matters where the litigants were the



Leon Abremovich's "Evil Eye" Store, 605 Main Street, Winnipeg, c. 1901. The store's name referred to a once common superstition (the Hebrew for "evil eye" is *ayin ha-ra*) that the glance of the eye can cause material harm even when operating at a distance. Here the name was intended to ward off bad luck.

Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada Collection, Manitoba Archives

refugees. There were pronounced attacks on the Russian Jews and growing opposition to further Jewish immigration. Goldwin Smith, Toronto-based lecturer, prolific essayist, social critic, and former professor of history, was the leading example of the intellectual anti-Semite of late Victorian Canada. Smith blamed Russia's Jews for pogroms, and with respect to further Jewish immigration to Manitoba and Canada, warned Galt to "hold his hand" in order to avoid "importing the worst of moral and commercial plagues into the country..."

Winter of 1882-83

The criticism of the Russian Jews, however, was tempered by a humanitarian concern for their existence during the winter of 1882-83. By early January 1883, many destitute refugee families were on the brink of starvation. Many diseases such as asthma, bronchitis, scarlet fever, and pneumonia were rampant in the Immigration Shed and shanties. The suffering of the refugees was heightened by the bitterly cold weather where temperatures plunged as low as -50°F accompanied by blizzards. The desperate plight of the refugees brought forth calls from the

Winnipeg press for immediate action. *The Daily Times* claimed that "for the credit of the country, they should not be allowed to perish." Sermons on the Russian Jews' behalf were delivered in local churches, described at this time as being "crowded to the door" with Winnipeggers who were "eminently a church-going community." At Holy Trinity Church, for example, Reverend Octave Fortin urged "the Christian public" to "not allow human beings to starve at our very doors."

Mass destitution had been unknown in Winnipeg. In 1881, the Council had spent less than \$150 for charity, but in January 1883, the Council appropriated \$300 for the refugees. This was supplemented by \$1,900 in Mansion House funds deposited by Galt and to be distributed at \$5 per capita. Another relief committee (the earlier one had disbanded) was organized at a public meeting at the Y.M.C.A.. Headed by C.E. Hamilton, a lawyer and executive of the Manitoba and North-West Railway Company, as chairman, and Alderman Thomas McCrossan and Victor Victorson as members, the group issued appeals for the Russian Jews. They obtained very substantial amounts of material (food, clothing, wood for fuel) and financial donations, including \$250 from the Anglo-Jewish Relief Association in Toronto. Indeed, the refugees survived largely because of "the kindly assistance of local residents."

Establishing Jewish Customs, Religion and Practices

The Russian and "*Deutsche*" (German) Jews, as the refugees referred to them, held *Rosh Hashonah* (New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) services in the Orthodox custom in rented rooms at Wesley Hall. All Winnipeggers were invited to attend and many did so. They "watched the exercises with evident interest," including special prayers for Queen Victoria. While the Holy Days were observed, according to the *Manitoba Free Press*, with the "greatest possible unanimity," discord arose shortly thereafter between the Anglo-German and Russian Jews. In addition to personality conflicts and disputes concerning the withholding of earnings, the two groups had arguments concerning kosher food and a Jewish cemetery.

For eight months after their arrival and until they obtained a *shochet*, or ritual slaughterer of cattle and poultry, of whom they approved, the Russian Jews refused to eat any meat offered by the resident Winnipeg Jews. Jews not approving of the ritual of Reverend Abraham Benjamin, lived on fish, bread and potatoes. An additional area of contention centred on the lack of a Jewish

cemetery, and was resolved to the Russian Jews' satisfaction only with the establishment in 1883 of the Hebrew Cemetery of Winnipeg, the B'nai Israel, in Springfield, east of the city.

Dissension in Winnipeg's Jewish Community

The "*Deutsche*" Jews feared the loss of their hard-won respectability because of the "uncouth strangers" who might "degenerate" into pedlars. Hyman Miller was an English-born Jew who had arrived in 1879 as the Manitoba representative and travelling salesman for a Toronto wholesale hardware firm. He was apprehensive that the Russian Jews would "crowd the cities and towns and proceed to make a precarious living as formerly, in their peculiar happy-go-lucky manner, which is extremely undesirable, besides evidently having a tendency to lower them in the estimation of the public and bringing them into contempt." While these views were unduly critical and pessimistic, the anxieties of the "*Deutsche Yuden*" (German Jews) were realized in the short run: the highly visible Russian Jews lowered the public perception of all Jews. This, in turn, resulted in increased manifestations of anti-Jewish sentiment in Manitoba and Western Canada.

The Jewish refugees' arrival was important for several reasons. Unlike the cases of Mennonites and Icelanders, who settled in Manitoba and the North-West Territories in the 1870s, no adequate advance planning, governmental or private, was undertaken. Responses by governments and the public to the Jews were haphazard and spontaneous. The rural settlement pattern of Mennonites and Icelanders, differed from the Russian Jews' which was urban. In a matter of days, the Winnipeg Jewish community became the third biggest in Canada, after those of Montreal and Toronto. Jews formed one of the largest and most easily identifiable ethno-religious groups in the city. While they likely did not consider the matter in 1882-83, the Russian Jews helped to create in Manitoba a multinational, or polyglot, society in the 1880s, and became one of the early components of Winnipeg's multicultural mosaic.

The problems of economic survival and cultural accommodation that the Jewish refugees encountered demonstrated that the Canadian government had no refugee policy. It showed that all levels of government had not established permanent resources to facilitate and to aid refugees and other immigrants in need. The Russian Jews' difficulties also were indicative of those to be faced in subsequent decades in Winnipeg and other Canadian



The Zionist Athletic Club, Winnipeg east side champions, 1903.

Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada Collection, Manitoba Archives

urban centres by various Central and Eastern European immigrant groups. Thrust into the midst of a population primarily Anglo-Celtic in origin, with thorough commitments to the Protestant ethic and the desirability of social and cultural assimilation, these later groups would face similar dilemmas.

Continued Immigration and Growth

In succeeding decades after the 1880s, thousands of European Jews, including Russians, fleeing religious, political, and economic persecution and oppression in various empires and countries, immigrated to Canada and settled in Manitoba. They followed many different callings throughout the province. Jews in Manitoba became general labourers, railway workers, craftsmen, pedlars, merchants, grocers, travelling salesmen, farmers, scrap and rag collectors, cattle dealers, garment workers, tailors, teachers, rabbis, and later, athletes, soldiers, politicians, and members of the learned professions.

Differences of national origin and form of worship, although significant for Manitoba Jewry at various times as they were in



The Jewish immigrant section of Winnipeg known as "New Jerusalem," Dufferin Avenue near Main Street, c. 1908.

Courtesy: Manitoba Archives

1882, were transcended by the things Jewish immigrants shared, including their religion, history as a people apart, and languages. The languages used were: Yiddish — a dialect of High German with a mixture of words of Hebrew, Romance, and Slavonic origin, developed in Central and Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages, and spoken as a vernacular by European Jews, and Hebrew — the ancient language of the Israelites, of prayer and religious observance in Judaism and later of the modern state of Israel.

Jewish newcomers gathered in the north end of Winnipeg where other Jews had settled earlier, and where employment could be obtained and synagogues established. They located also on dairy farms in West Kildonan, in agricultural colonies such as Bender Hamlet (Narcisse) and Camper (New Hirsch), and in small towns in agricultural regions where the Jewish-owned general store (at one time there were over 100 in Manitoba) was as common as the Chinese restaurant or laundry.

Soon after their arrival in Manitoba, and especially in the period 1900-1930, Jews formed a wide variety of diverse religious, educational, cultural, self-help and benevolent, service, social, political, Zionist and athletic organizations. This occurred in all urban centres in North America, greatly enriching Jewish communal life and allowing it to acquire its characteristic patterns. In Winnipeg, as many commentators have observed, highly developed cultural, religious, and educational institutions were

established, and the city's Jewish schools, both religious and secular, were an extraordinary achievement.

Social Barriers

Manitoba Jews encountered "the curse" of anti-Semitism, for example: quotas restricting entrants to Manitoba's medical school; hiring practices in other professions and the workplace in general; tacit covenants excluding them from summer resorts, clubs, and certain residential areas; and the vicious hatred espoused by William Whittaker's neo-Nazi Nationalist Party of Canada during the 1930s. Despite such slights, the province's Jews progressed largely through an emphasis on the importance of education, and they took full advantage of the freedoms and opportunities offered them.

Settlement Patterns

Manitoba Jewry grew slowly in numbers in the latter part of the nineteenth century (there were 745 Jews by religion in the province in 1891) and then very rapidly in the first three decades of the twentieth century (10,636 Jews by religion lived in Manitoba in 1911; 19,193 in 1931). Although the total Jewish population slightly declined during the Great Depression, it was reinforced in the immediate post-World War II period by substantial numbers of Holocaust survivors, and in the 1970s and 1980s by smaller numbers of Russian Jews. The province's Jewish community was probably at its numerical zenith of more than 20,000 in the mid-to-late 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, Manitoba's Jewish population decreased.

While Jews lived on farms, and in villages, towns, and cities outside Winnipeg, the provincial capital was, and remains, the centre of Jewish communal life in Manitoba. With few exceptions, the number of Jews in smaller Manitoba centres has diminished as they and their children have moved to Winnipeg for educational, religious, social, and other reasons. The Manitoba Jewish community of today, estimated to be 15,000 to 16,000, is almost entirely urban and highly integrated within the larger society.



Jewish farmers and their children, Pine Ridge, Manitoba, c. 1912.

Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada Collection, Manitoba Archives

Suggestions For Further Reading

Several historical studies have been devoted to Manitoba Jewry, including the 1882 immigration. Among the specialized treatments are Arthur Chiel's *Jewish Experiences in Early Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Jewish Publications, 1955) and *The Jews in Manitoba: A Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), sections of Harry Gutkin's *Journey into our Heritage: The Story of the Jewish People in the Canadian West* (Toronto: Lester and Open Dennys, 1980), articles by Abraham Arnold, including "The Contribution of the Jews to the Opening and Development of the West," in *Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions* 1968-69, "The Earliest Jews in Winnipeg, 1874-1882," in *The Beaver: Magazine of the North*, Autumn, 1974, and "Jewish Immigration to Western Canada in the 1880s," in *Jewish Historical Society of Canada Journal*, Fall, 1977, and many of the papers published by the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada (1970, 1972, 1983, 1985, 1988). Much of the information in this pamphlet is taken from Chapter I of Henry Trachtenberg's unpublished Ph. D thesis, "The 'Old Clo' Move': Anti-Semitism, Politics and the Jews of Winnipeg, 1882-1921" (York University, 1984). Harry and Mildred Gutkin in *The Best of Times, The Worst of Times* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1987), offer insights into the history of the Winnipeg Jewish community in the 20th century, as do three unpublished theses completed at the University of Manitoba by Harvey Herstein

(M.Ed., 1964), Ernest Chisick (M.A., 1972) and Roseline Usiskin (M.A., 1978), and some articles in *The Journal of the Jewish Historical Society of Canada* (Windsor: 1970s and 1980s). A few first-hand accounts of Manitoba Jews' experiences have been published in Yiddish by Falek Zolf, Mark Selchen, S. Almazov Pearl, Aaron Osovsky, Esther Shechter, Moishe Bloshtein, and others, and in English by Sheppy Hershfield, *I Remember When*, third ed. (Winnipeg: the author, 1974), and Leible Hershfield, *The Jewish Athlete: A Nostalgic View* (Winnipeg: the author, 1980). Different aspects of Manitoba Jewish history are found in general historical works on Canadian Jewry.

The Manitoba Heritage Council



THE BEGINNING OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MANITOBA

In the spring of 1882, some 350 Russian Jews fleeing Czarist persecution arrived in Winnipeg. They had been assisted in their journey by the Mansion House Committee in London, England. Difficulties in negotiating for land to accommodate a planned agricultural colony kept the immigrants from continuing further west. Awaiting resolution of the problems, the new arrivals remained at Winnipeg, where a handful of Jews recently arrived from England and Germany struggled to assist them.

The refugees spent a harsh winter in the spartan conditions of immigration sheds which were then situated near the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Although the Jews encountered some hostility from the public, there was sympathy and support from church and civic leaders.

From these difficult beginnings, subsequent generations of Jewish Manitobans established their vibrant community in Winnipeg.



A multilingual plaque (English, French and Yiddish) is located on The Wall of Heritage in the Y.M.H.A. Jewish Community Centre, 370 Hargrave Street, corner of Qu'Appelle Avenue, in Winnipeg.

Provincial Commemorative Plaques Program

Manitoba's Provincial Commemorative Plaques Program honours those people, places and events which have contributed to the province's development. To date, more than 100 plaques have been erected.

Proposals to commemorate Manitoba's heritage resources come from many sources, including interested groups and individuals. After careful research by the Historic Resources Branch, proposals are submitted for recommendations to an advisory board composed of historians, archaeologists, architects, and others active in the heritage field. Those deemed to have provincial rather than local significance are forwarded to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation for final decision.

Plaques are usually located at sites associated with the people, places or events being honoured.